

THE DELIBERATE DETECTIVE

BEING A HISTORY OF THE EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES OF
MR. STANLEY BROOKE, AND OF THE STRANGE PART-
NERSHIP RESULTING THEREFROM

BY E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

AUTHOR OF "A PRINCE OF SINNERS," "CONSPIRATORS," "THE MASTER MUMMER," ETC.

WITH A DRAWING BY W. B. KING

EDITOR'S NOTE—The editor of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE is as pleased as a host who offers an excellent dinner to present here the first in a series of eight great detective stories by E. Phillips Oppenheim, master of the craft. Not alone do these stories follow the science of crime detection and illumination in all its devious fascination; they present also a *human* detective, baring human frailties in his own logical, unique way. Better still, you will meet here the original woman detective—the only flesh-blood-and-tears woman detective in the army of detectives you have met and forgotten in fiction's march. You'll never forget the lady detective in Mr. Oppenheim's present series. You'll be like Mr. Stanley Brooke—you'll want to kiss her yourself before you've gone very far with her.

THE RESCUE OF WARREN TYRRWELL

TALE THE FIRST

Lord WIMBLEDON was plainly out of sorts with everything and everybody. He looked gloomily across at the young man who shared the compartment with him in the Paris express, an expression of irritation on his severe face.

The young man, quite oblivious to the fretful scrutiny, adjusted the golf-bag against the seat and turned to the pages of an illustrated sporting magazine.

"What on earth did you bring those things with you for?" the old gentleman asked, irritably.

The Hon. Stanley Brooke, scientific illuminator of crime, smiled up at him.

"They assist," he replied, "in giving an air of general negligence to our journey. No one would imagine, for instance, that

reasonable men would take golf-clubs with them to Paris on an errand like ours."

Lord Wimbledon grunted, fumbled for a moment in his waistcoat-pocket, and finally produced a telegram which he smoothed out and passed across to Brooke.

"If only one could form any idea as to what our errand was!" he remarked irritably. "Read it aloud, please."

Brooke obeyed. The message had been handed in at Paris about midnight on the previous day, and was addressed to Lord Wimbledon:

Beg you to come over at once. Am in great trouble.

WARREN.

"Can you make anything out of it?" Lord Wimbledon asked.

"Nothing," Brooke admitted.

"The most idiotic message I ever received in my life," his lordship continued. "However, I suppose we shall know all about it presently. I hope to goodness he hasn't got himself into any trouble with his chief. Tell me honestly now, Brooke, how does it strike you?"

"To be candid," Brooke replied, "I should say that it does point to some sort of trouble at the embassy. If it had been a private matter, he would surely have written. I must confess, though, that I don't understand it at all. Sidney was always such a careful chap."

"He has never," Lord Wimbledon pronounced, "given me cause for one moment's anxiety."

"That," Brooke sighed, "is what makes it so disquieting. Paris is no place for a young man of that sort."

Lord Wimbledon relapsed into stony silence. It was not until they reached the outskirts of Paris that he spoke again.

"Well, we shall soon know all about it now," he remarked, as they collected their baggage. "Let me come to the window. I shall recognize Warren more easily than you."

The train glided into the Gare du Nord. There was the usual little rush of porters and the bustle of descending passengers. They made their way toward the barrier. The frown on Lord Wimbledon's face grew deeper. There was no sign at all of Warren."

"I can't understand it," he repeated, for the twentieth time. "The boy must know how anxious I feel, and I wired that I was coming on this train. Hello!"

A little dark man had touched Lord Wimbledon upon the arm.

"You are Lord Wimbledon?" he asked.

"I am, sir," was the curt reply. "If you are connected with the press, let me say at once that I am traveling incognito. I do not wish my presence—"

"I have nothing to do with the press," the little man interrupted. "I have come to you from your son, Mr. Warren Tyrrwell."

Lord Wimbledon looked him up and down with disfavor. He was neatly dressed, with pale face a little wizened, but his clothes and manners were of the middle class. He had the appearance of a respectable tradesman—perhaps a detective.

"If you have a message from my son," Lord Wimbledon said, "please let me hear it at once."

"There is a little trouble," the man announced slowly. "It would be best, perhaps, not to speak here on the platform. You have registered luggage?"

"None," Lord Wimbledon replied. "I am proposing to return to-morrow."

"If you will come this way into the buffet," the little man said, "one can speak there with more freedom."

"Lead the way, then," Lord Wimbledon answered sharply. "This is my traveling companion, Mr. Brooke."

They passed hurriedly across the open space and mounted the stairs to the buffet. The little man led the way to a table in the corner.

"Coffee—bring anything," Lord Wimbledon ordered of the expectant waiter—"coffee and brandy will do. Now, sir," he added, "if you will be so good as to get on with your message. You can speak before my friend here; he is in my confidence."

"My name," the little man announced, "is Antin. For the last year your son has made use of me as a guide and interpreter. I am, at the present moment, having been unfortunate with my other work, occupying the position of his valet."

Lord Wimbledon frowned.

"I was not aware that my son had a valet here," he remarked.

"What I have told you is the truth, my lord," the man declared. "It is only during the last two months that I have filled this position, but the season has been a bad one in Paris, and it has provided me at least with a roof and an opportunity to look around me. If you will pardon my saying so, it will be better, for the present at any rate, if you will accept my statement."

Lord Wimbledon nodded.

"Very well, then," he said; "go on."

"Mr. Tyrrwell was, as you are doubtless aware, my lord," the little man continued, "fond of visiting the out-of-the-way corners of Paris and mixing with people of strange nationalities. Considering his official position in this city, it will probably occur to you to wonder whether such a course was altogether wise. In any case, the telegram is the result of trouble into which Mr. Tyrrwell has fallen during one of these expeditions."

"Tell me at once," Lord Wimbledon begged, "the nature of this trouble?"

"I am coming to it," the man declared. "It is perhaps within your lordship's knowledge that Mr. Tyrrwell's special duties at the embassy lately have been connected with Russian affairs. Mr. Tyrrwell has had lessons in the language and is fairly proficient. He has taken great interest in the Russian colony, and he and I have visited together occasionally some places of which it is well not to speak too openly."

"Yesterday afternoon Mr. Tyrrwell brought back from the embassy a document consisting of about twenty pages of foolscap pinned together. He told me that he should not stir out until he had finished translating them from the Russian tongue. He set to work almost at once with the dictionary, and I made him some tea."

"I understood from him that he had been given special permission to bring the work away from the embassy, as a reception was going on there, and part of the premises being closed for repairs, it was difficult for him to find a quiet corner."

"In the course of his work Mr. Tyrrwell came across several phrases which he was quite unable to translate. He asked for my help, but my knowledge of the Russian tongue is very slight, and I was unable to assist him."

"He did then what at the moment seemed only natural. He sent for a taximeter automobile and drove to the address of the man from whom he received lessons in Russian. That was about eight o'clock last night. Since then I have not seen Mr. Tyrrwell."

"You have not seen him," Lord Wimbledon repeated. "You mean that he has not returned?"

"About half past nine last night," the man went on, "the telephone rang. I answered it, and the voice which spoke to me was the voice of Mr. Tyrrwell. I could tell at once from his tone that something was wrong. He told me that he was down at the café over which the man Grika lives, from whom he has received Russian lessons, and there was something going on which he did not understand."

"He was left alone for a moment, from what I gathered, and had rushed to a telephone in the back room. He seemed to be afraid that they were going to keep him there for some purpose. He begged me to

come down at once, but to come quietly. In the middle of the last sentence the telephone was disconnected."

"Disconnected!" Lord Wimbledon exclaimed.

The little man nodded.

"I heard Mr. Tyrrwell's voice suddenly choke," he said. "What happened, without doubt, was that some one had stolen up from behind and dragged him away."

"Good God!" Lord Wimbledon cried. "What did you do?"

"I took an automobile to the place," the man replied. "I saw Professor Grika at once. He was sitting in the café, which occupies the lower part of the premises, with some friends. He seemed surprised, but not in the least discomposed, at my visit. As to your son, he assured me that he had not seen him for ten days.

"I bribed the waiters and a servant. I could learn nothing. I sat for some time in the café, thinking. Then I followed Grika to his room. I spoke to him plainly. I told him that Mr. Warren Tyrrwell was an Englishman of high position; that any attempt to ill-use him or to tamper with any documents he might have had with him could only result in utter disaster.

"I threatened to go to the police. I spoke to him seriously. It was useless. Grika begged me to take any steps I liked, to have the place searched. He treated me as though I were a mild lunatic, and persisted in his statement that he had not seen Mr. Tyrrwell for ten days. Neither could I find any telephone upon the premises. Therefore I came away. I could think of nothing to do. I sent you the telegram in your son's name."

Lord Wimbledon sprang to his feet.

"Why didn't you go to the police at once?" he exclaimed.

"Because if the affair becomes known," Antin replied, "I presume that Mr. Tyrrwell will get into trouble at the embassy. He confided to me that the document which he had brought away from the embassy was one of great importance. It will scarcely be considered discreet that he should have gone to such an unsavory neighborhood with any portion of that document in his possession."

"In a sense that is true," Lord Wimbledon admitted. "On the other hand, my son's personal safety is the chief concern. What do you think, Mr. Brooke?"

"I should suggest," Brooke said, "that

you allow me to pay a visit to Professor Grika. It can do no harm and will only delay matters a little."

Lord Wimbledon jumped at the idea.

"I place myself entirely in your hands, Brooke," he declared. "My own impulse, I must admit, is instantly to visit this man myself with a posse of *gendarmes* at my back. Warren's official position, however, must be considered. If that can be saved as well, so much the better. You have gifts in affairs of this sort, Brooke, which have been denied to me. We will await your return."

"Better go to Warren's rooms, I think," Brooke advised. "Get back there as quickly as you can, and wait for me. Now write down this man Grika's address, if you please," he added, turning to Antin.

The little man tore off a piece from the menu and obeyed. Brooke turned to Lord Wimbledon, lowering his voice a little.

"If I were you," he said, "I should get back to Warren's rooms as quickly as you can, and take this man with you. I hope I may be able to bring you a report of some sort or another in a very short time."

Even the driver of the automobile hesitated when Brooke directed him to drive to 83 Rue de Mont Bleu.

"It is far, *monsieur*," he objected, "and the roads are very narrow and difficult. One does not often approach the Rue de Mont Bleu in an automobile."

"You will do so," Brooke assured him cheerfully, "and you will receive for *pourboire* another of these when our errand is accomplished."

The man pocketed the five-franc piece and mounted a little reluctantly to his box. He paused for a moment to roll a cigarette, and started off. Even though he drove with the customary recklessness of his class, they reached safely in time the district they sought.

Here their progress became slow. There were stalls out in the street, strange names transcribed in Jewish characters over the shops. The streets were ill-lit, the men and women had little of the air of French people. They were far removed, indeed, from the children of the city of pleasure.

There was another turn, a long and silent boulevard filled with decaying houses, a steep climb, and another narrow street. At a *café* half-way along it the automobile came to a standstill.

"*Voilà, monsieur*," the man announced.

"You can wait," Brooke ordered.

The man looked about him with an air of contempt.

"If one can but obtain a drink in this hole—" he grumbled.

Brooke stepped through the swing-door into the *café*. The place had none of the characteristics of similar establishments on the other side of the city. It was, in fact, more like an English public house near the wharfs. The illuminations were dim and scanty, the sawdust on the floor was stale, the few customers were gathered together at a table in a remote corner, intent on watching a game of dominoes.

They turned their heads at Brooke's entrance and stared with something in their faces which reminded one of hungry vermin.

Brooke addressed himself to a lady of great size who stood behind the counter. She had very fat cheeks and small black eyes. Her hair was jet-black and showed no signs of any attempt at care or arrangement. Her dress was insufficient.

She looked at Brooke with the palms of her two hands stretched flat upon the counter. She looked at him steadily, and the natural viciousness of her expression was overshadowed for the moment by a certain blank surprise.

Brooke, carefully dressed notwithstanding his journey, his smooth, boyish face unwrinkled, his mouth still a trifle open, his monocle in his left eye, was a type of person of whom *madame* had had no experience. As she studied him the many wrinkles in her face relaxed. Her lips parted a little and disclosed her yellow teeth. One might imagine that if indeed she were a partner in any nefarious scheme, the advent of the Hon. Stanley Brooke had failed to inspire her with forebodings.

"I understand," Brooke said, "that Professor Grika lives here and that he gives lessons in Russian. I should like to see him."

"Professor Grika has gone into the country for three days," *madame* declared. "He is not to be found here."

Brooke hesitated for a moment. Without turning his head, he was yet aware that the little group of men in the corner had suspended their game. Their faces were turned toward him. They were all listening.

"It is unfortunate," he continued, "as

I have come so far. *Madame* will be so good as to give me a glass of cognac."

She moved slowly toward a row of bottles and served him. Brooke raised the thick glass to his lips. The liquor which he tasted was like fire. He coughed, and the woman laughed.

"*Monsieur* is used to milder drinks," she remarked scornfully.

"It is of no consequence," he replied. "I must admit that I find the brandy a little fiery, but it is perhaps suitable for the tastes of your clients. Is it possible, may I ask, that you give me the address of Professor Grika?"

The woman was replacing the cork in the bottle.

"One never knows where he is to be found," she declared. "He comes and goes when he wills. A strange man! He is perhaps visiting the president or the King of England. It is as much as I know."

Brooke turned his head slightly. He could hear the sound of a man's footsteps coming across the sanded floor. A large, loosely built man, collarless and unshaven, wearing only a shirt and trousers, had approached.

"*Monsieur* was inquiring for Professor Grika?"

Brooke admitted the fact affably. The man pointed to a table.

"We will sit down, you and I," he said, "and for something to drink—"

"Serve *monsieur*, I pray, with what he desires," Brooke interrupted.

The woman grinned and half filled him a glass out of the bottle from which she had served Brooke. The man led the way to a little wooden table. They sat down before it.

"We speak plainly here," the man growled, folding his arms and looking steadfastly at Brooke. "What is it you want?"

"A few words with Professor Grika," Brooke replied.

His companion looked at him steadfastly. His face was coarse, brutal, vicious, and unwashed. His small eyes had contracted almost into points underneath his lowering brows. He seemed to be subjecting Brooke to a steadfast examination. Presently he glanced across at the woman. She made a sign to him.

"There are many reasons," he said slowly, "why Professor Grika does not at

once receive all those who may choose to visit him."

Brooke's mouth opened a little wider. He kept the monocle firmly in his left eye.

"Political?" he asked.

"Political," his *vis-à-vis* admitted gravely. "But why not? The professor was exiled from Russia. They called him a nihilist because he was of the people. That is why he came to France—France, which should be a country for the people. Bah!"

The man spat upon the floor. Then he crouched across the table, so close that Brooke leaned back to escape his garlic-laden breath.

"For a louis," he said, "you shall see Professor Grika."

"I don't understand," Brooke protested, "why I should pay a louis to see a man whom I have come to ask to teach me Russian."

"I tell you," the other replied, "that Grika is a difficult person to see. You might come here a dozen times and be refused. It is worth a louis. Come!"

He held out his hand. Brooke affected to hesitate for a moment. Then he placed the piece of gold upon the table. The man pocketed it and rose.

"Come this way," he directed.

They left the front room of the café and passed through a door, the two upper panes of which were broken and stuffed with brown paper. They climbed a flight of uneven stairs and arrived on a landing. Brooke's guide, who had been whistling to himself all the way up, whistled a little louder. Then he knocked at the door of a room.

"You can go in," he said. "You'll find Professor Grika there."

Brooke entered the room without hesitation. He heard the footsteps of his guide departing as he closed the door behind him. To his surprise the apartment, though plainly furnished, was clean, the floor carpeted, the walls filled with books and pictures. A man sat writing before a table, with a green-shaded lamp by his side. He looked up at Brooke's entrance. He was a man with a white beard, hollows in his cheeks—a frail man, apparently very old. His voice, when he spoke, shook a little.

"*Monsieur* desired to see me?"

"If you are Professor Grika, yes," Brooke replied. "I was recommended to you some time ago by an English friend of

mine—Mr. Warren Tyrrell. I wish to take some lessons in Russian."

Professor Grika regarded his visitor thoughtfully. It was curious that, although Brooke's accent as a rule was a matter upon which he prided himself, he was speaking now with a curious, almost a guttural pronunciation.

"Mr. Warren Tyrrell," Professor Grika repeated. "Yes, yes; I remember the young gentleman perfectly. Why do you wish to learn Russian, *monsieur*?"

"I am in the German army," Brooke replied. "Staff officers are required to know at least two languages. I have chosen Russian for one, and I wish to make use of my vacation to acquire, at any rate, the rudiments of the language."

The professor nodded gently. He seemed, indeed, a very quiet and harmless old man.

"Sit down, please," he invited.

Brooke took an easy chair close to the table. Professor Grika leaned back in his chair. The light now fell upon Brooke's face and left his in the shadow.

"A German officer, eh—a German officer?" the professor repeated thoughtfully. "To me you speak French more with an English accent."

"I have studied in England," Brooke replied. "In my profession a knowledge of English is a necessity."

"Tell me, in a few words," Grika asked, lowering his tone, "why you chose to come to me for lessons in the Russian language. There are many others more fashionably located."

Brooke sat for a moment immovable. Then he rose from his place and walked carefully all round the room. Professor Grika made no effort to interfere with him. When he resumed his seat he moved a little nearer.

"Because," he said, "not only am I, as I have told you, a German officer, but I am in the Confidential Service. I know very well, among other things, Professor Grika, that you are a secret-service agent of a country which we will not mention.

"You, like all of us, have been working, without a doubt, to get at the truth of the new French mobilization scheme, the caliber of the new gun which has been made so secretly, and the disposition of the new batteries.

"It is possible that you may succeed where we others fail. Very well, I am

here to deal with you. If by any chance you should light upon that scheme, or any part of it, it will be to your interest to name the price to me."

The professor remained motionless in his chair. His eyes were fixed upon Brooke as though he would read his soul. Brooke, bland and insouciant, had the appearance of a man who had been talking about the latest fashion in cravats.

"What is your name?" he asked at last.

"Captain von Heldermann," Brooke replied promptly.

"I have not heard of you," Professor Grika said slowly. "You put before me a new idea. Such work as I have done I have been promptly paid for from another source. An exile from my country though I may be, I have preferred to use my small gifts in the interests of—"

"You use them more effectually," Brooke interrupted, "when you study the interests of Germany. This *entente* is an absurdity. No treaties in the world can bridge over the gulf which remains between Russian and English interests. What is your price for that scheme?"

"A quarter of a million francs."

Brooke frowned slightly.

"I fear," he said, "that it will require consideration. The funds at my disposal—"

"One hundred thousand francs," the professor interrupted.

"If the scheme includes for certain the caliber of the gun," Brooke continued slowly—

"It does," the professor assured him. "I do not know, Captain von Heldermann, from whence you derived your information, but it is most assuredly a fact that a document containing all these particulars was received at the British embassy yesterday. I cannot say how they procured it, but, unlike all official documents, it was in Russian, not French. One page of it I have already seen. The remainder will be in my hands to-night."

"Then at midday to-morrow," Brooke said, "I will be here with a hundred thousand francs."

The professor sat quite quietly for several moments. His shoulders were hunched. He looked now down at the desk, now into Brooke's face.

"It is arranged," he declared at last. "Permit me."

He rose from his place and took Brooke

by the arm. For a moment he listened. Then he opened the door. Unfamiliar though the sound seemed from his lips, he whistled softly.

"I shall descend with you," he announced.

Brooke was conscious, as they reached the end of the passage, of retreating foot-steps. He caught a glimpse of two men stealing away; caught a glimpse, even, of the knife in the belt of one of them. The door at the bottom of the stairs was locked. Again the professor whistled. The woman unlocked it. She stood there with lowering face.

"It is not an affair for our benefit, this, then!" she exclaimed shrilly. "Jean will be furious indeed—and I! For what are we here? Why should we let opportunities—"

The professor held out his hand.

"*Madame*," he said, "all will be compensated to you. This gentleman has my safe conduct."

He walked with Brooke through the café to the pavement outside and stood there as his visitor drove away. Brooke drove to the block of flats in which Warren's rooms were situated, changing his automobile twice during the journey. Antin admitted him and he found Lord Wimbledon walking up and down the little sitting-room.

"Well? Well?" the latter exclaimed eagerly. "Have you found him? Is he there?"

"I believe so," Brooke replied, handing his hat to Antin and drawing off his gloves. "To tell you the truth, I never asked."

Lord Wimbledon stared at him.

"Don't you see," Brooke continued, "the great thing is to get Warren out of this without any trouble at the embassy. I have discovered at least this much—that he was not so rash as appeared. He took with him to that Russian one page only of the document in question."

"But where is my boy? What are they doing to him?" Lord Wimbledon demanded.

"One can only hazard surmises," Brooke replied thoughtfully. "I believe that our friend Grika has him safely under lock and key, and the neighborhood is certainly a horrible one. But on the other hand, Grika is much too clever to take unnecessary risks. In any case, we must play the game, for Warren's sake and every one's.

You haven't communicated with the embassy at all, sir?"

"Certainly not," Lord Wimbledon replied. "I have done nothing but wait here for you."

Brooke nodded, and for the first time made a careful survey of his surroundings. The small sitting-room in which they were bore every sign of a hurried departure. There were writing materials which had evidently been thrown hastily down upon the table and a small locked safe stood on one side. There were plenty of loose sheets of paper about; no written ones. Brooke nodded approvingly.

"The boy wasn't quite such a mug, then," he murmured. "He locked up the rest when he started out for Grika. Now, sir," he added, turning to Lord Wimbledon, "I want you, if you don't mind, to go into the little dining-room, take Antin with you, and lock yourselves in. Very likely Antin will be able to find you something in the way of dinner. If you hear a ring, don't answer the bell; and if there is a bolt upon the door, don't draw it."

"It would be more satisfactory to me—" Lord Wimbledon began.

Brooke held out his hand. He spoke with unusual abruptness.

"I want you to do as I ask this moment," he insisted.

Lord Wimbledon made no further objection. He left the room at once, followed by Antin. As soon as they had departed Brooke lifted the curtains which divided the sitting-room from the bedroom, and drawing an easy chair up behind them, settled down to wait.

He had turned out the lights, both in the sitting-room and the bedroom, but he had pulled a small table up to his side on which was an electric reading-lamp which he could turn on at a moment's notice. For a little more than an hour he sat there waiting. Then the silence of the flat was suddenly broken by the shrill ringing of the electric bell. There was no reply. It rang again, and again there was no response.

Then, a few moments later, Brooke heard the click of a key in the outer door, which was at once softly opened and closed. There was the sound of footsteps in the outer hall, the opening of the sitting-room door, and Grika's voice, low, yet commanding.

"Turn on the lights!"

Through the chink in the curtains Brooke saw the little room suddenly illuminated. Warren, white as a sheet, with rings under his eyes, was standing by the side of the switch. A few feet away, still in his hat and overcoat, was Grika. The latter spoke again.

"What are all these papers upon the table?"

"The beginning of my translation," Warren faltered.

"Where is the document itself?"

"In the safe," was the mumbled reply.

"Unlock it at once!" Grika directed. "You have the keys."

The young man hesitated. From where he was Brooke could see that his hands were shaking all the time. About a yard away from him Grika stood, and poised lightly in his fingers was a dull little bar of some springy metal with a leaden top.

"Remember," Grika said softly, "that if you give me the slightest trouble you will go down like a stone once and for ever. I shall have the papers anyway—you know that. You know that I shall keep my word, and you know that all my arrangements are made for escaping from here. Unlock that safe."

The young man hesitated no longer. With shaking fingers he adjusted the combination. The door swung open. Grika drew from it a little roll of papers which he thrust into his pocket.

"It is finished," he said softly. "You have escaped lightly. Others who have visited me in the Rue de Mont Bleu have suffered what you have suffered for a week and more instead of for a few hours only. A month's vacation or a short time in the hospital will put you all right again. See how thoughtful I am. I am going to save even your reputation."

He had drawn a cord from his overcoat pocket. With his hand upon Warren's chest, he was forcing him back into the easy chair.

"I shall tie you hand and foot," he announced. "You will be discovered in a state of collapse. Your reputation will be saved."

Brooke set his teeth. The moment had come. With his left hand he threw aside the curtain and stepped into the room.

"If you make the slightest movement," he said quietly, "I shall fire."

The little man seemed, for a moment, stiffened into some suspended form of life.

Then he turned his head very slowly and looked into Brooke's face. There was not the slightest sign of any expression in his features. It was as though he had been turned to stone. Yet Brooke knew all the time that he was thinking, that his brain was working rapidly and fiercely. Warren Tyrrwell, after one little sobbing cry, had fallen forward, stretched upon the floor in a dead faint.

"Take those papers from your overcoat pocket and place them upon the table," Brooke continued. "Don't hesitate. Listen. You are my man if I choose to take you. I don't. You are free. The papers, though—every one of them. You brought the missing sheet with you I notice. Leave it with the others."

Grika drew a little breath. Very slowly he began to empty his pockets. The roll of papers lay upon the table.

"So you mean to save your hundred thousand francs, Captain von Helder-
mann," he said slowly.

"That is the idea," Brooke admitted coolly. "Be careful there are no odd sheets left in your pockets. Turn the pockets inside out, please—so. Nothing left there, I see. Very well. Now, professor, I have nothing more to do with you."

The man looked at him. His cold blue eyes were filled with reluctant admiration.

"If I might be permitted," he said, "to give you a word of advice, I think, after all, you had better pull that trigger. You have outwitted me to-day and robbed me of a prize which was surely mine. It took only a few hours," he added scornfully, "to make pap of that young man. He was my broken creature."

"To the door, Professor Grika," Brooke ordered. "Leave it wide open and descend the stairs. I shall follow you."

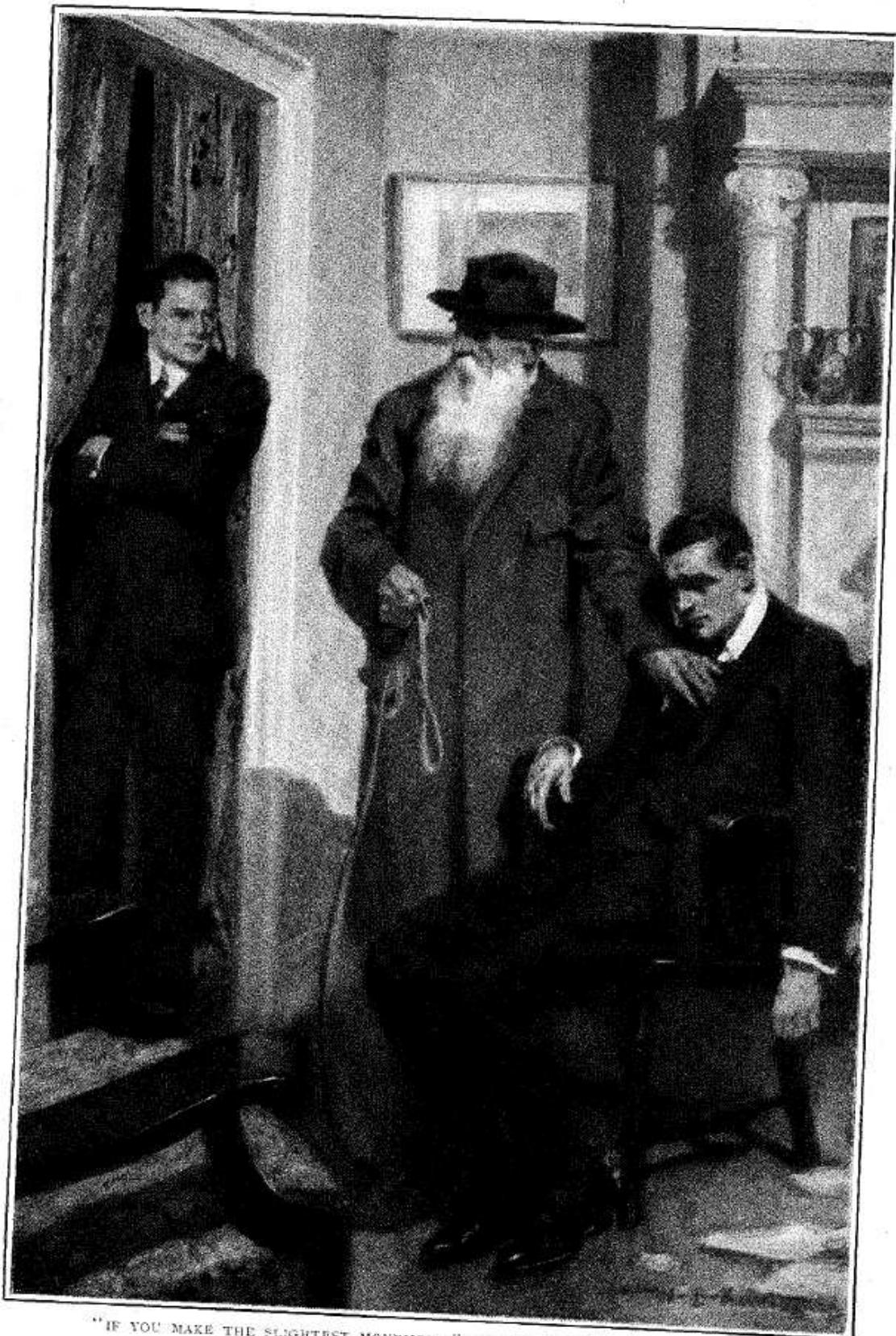
The professor buttoned up his coat.

"I have no wish to stay," he said. "I only hope that we may meet again, Captain von Helder-
mann."

"Mr. Stanley Brooke," Brooke corrected him. "That young man is a relative," he added, pointing to where Warren lay upon the floor. "A family affair, you see. So you will understand why this little matter has to be kept secret."

The professor removed his hat.

"Sir," he said, "my congratulations are the more heartfelt. I depart. Only," he added, with a little flash of his eyes, "if ever the time should come when it is you



"IF YOU MAKE THE SLIGHTEST MOVEMENT," HE SAID QUIETLY, "I SHALL FIRE."

Drawn by W. B. King

whose hands are empty and my right finger where yours is now—”

“Exactly!” Brooke interrupted, as he stood at the top of the steps. “Good night, professor!”

He watched the man disappear and returned to the sitting-room. Lord Wimbledon and Antin answered his summons at once.

“You’ll find Warren all right in a few minutes,” Brooke assured them quickly. “The papers are all right, too.”

The telephone-bell suddenly tinkled. Brooke took up the receiver himself.

“Hello!” he said. “Yes, these are Mr. Warren Tyrrwell’s rooms. Yes, Mr. Tyrrwell is in. Who is it? Percival? That you, Percival? I’m Brooke—Stanley Brooke—remember me? Just ran over to look Warren up for a few days. Found him rather seedy, I am sorry to say, struggling with some extra work. Oh, no! He’s all right. He’s here—hasn’t been out all day, he tells me. Right-o! Yes, we shall all be here. Lord Wimbledon is over for a few days, too. So-long!”

Brooke set down the receiver. Then he turned toward Lord Wimbledon. Warren was sitting up in his chair, drinking the brandy which Antin had brought.

“Listen,” he said, “the chief has just found out that you were allowed to bring those papers away. They have had a fit of nerves. Percival’s coming round at once. Remember, you haven’t been out. You’ve been ill. You’ve been meaning to get on with the work, but you haven’t been well enough because of this attack. That’s all. Stick to it and you’re safe. If any one thinks that they saw you out, they were mistaken.”

Warren Tyrrwell blinked his eyes for a moment and looked around.

“That’s all right,” he said, a little more cheerfully. “I’m feeling better already. I’m glad it’s Percival who’s coming.”

Lord Wimbledon crossed the room and rested his hand upon Brooke’s shoulder. His voice shook a little.

“You have saved Warren’s career, and

the honor of our family,” he declared solemnly.

Warren’s lips were suddenly quivering. He seemed on the verge of a complete breakdown.

“I should have given up the papers,” he sobbed. “I was broken. I can’t tell you what they did—”

“Hush!” Brooke interrupted sternly. “All you have to remember is this: You did not give up the papers. You had no real intention of giving them up. Be a man now and see this thing through. Remember that Percival will be here presently.”

Brooke sat at supper an hour later with Percival in a fashionable Montmartre restaurant.

“I am afraid, after all, Paris doesn’t agree with Warren,” the latter remarked, as he sipped his wine. “If he gets the least strain upon him, or a few hours’ extra work even, he knocks up.”

“He is not strong,” Brooke admitted; “but why on earth do you expect a chap to do a schoolboy’s task like translating? Why don’t you send it out to a teacher or some one?”

Percival smiled in a superior manner.

“My dear fellow,” he said, “that document which we entrusted to Warren was a most important political paper. To tell you the truth, it was entirely a mistake that he was allowed to take it away from the embassy, and the chief was in a rare stew when he knew about it.”

“Why?” Brooke asked, looking hungrily at the dish which was being prepared for them.

Percival dropped his voice.

“One has to be jolly careful over here, I can tell you,” he declared. “There are lots of people in Paris—people whom we know quite well to be agents—secret agents for foreign powers—who would have given a fortune for a sight of those papers.”

Brooke smiled at him doubtfully.

“Sort of thing we read about but don’t believe,” he remarked incredulously.

THE NEXT STORY IN THIS SERIES

“THE PRINCESS PAYS”

WILL APPEAR IN THE JANUARY MUNSEY